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A DREAM
OF A GARDEN

AND
OTHER POEMS



BY
ELLEN CLARE PEARSON

In memory of
Mary Jane Sheppard

from a gift by
William Rodes Moran

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A DREAM OF A GARDEN

AND OTHER POEMS:

BY

ELLEN CLARE PEARSON

(née MILLER),

Author of "Eastern Sketches."

WITH FLORAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. F. M.



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A DREAM OF A GARDEN.

I HAVE a dream of a garden fair,
Where all that is bright is blooming ;
Wallflower and jasmine and pinks are there,
The sunny air perfuming.

Rich are the holly-hedges green,
And thick the laurel-bushes,
Where the blackbirds build 'mid the leafy screen,
With the finches and the thrushes.

The hollyhock rears his stately head
Above the soft grass-alley,
And the peony blooms, and a shady bed
Of lily of the valley.

A rosebed spreads its clusters bright
Of the sweetest flowers e'er growing,
Old Tuscany roses pink and white,
And moss and blush-rose blowing.

Down on the grass at early day,
Comes the blackbird mellow-throated,
And up on the leafy walnut spray
Sings the thrush, the golden-noted.

Oh ! I see those garden-slopes again,
With Spring's rich colours flooded,
Ranunculus, hyacinth, tulip, then,
And bright anemone budded.

The crown-imperial's bells hung high,
Violets lay leaf-embosomed,
Hepatica, blue as Summer's sky,
And yellow crocus blossomed.

There were winding-walks for little feet,
All fringed with box-wood olden,
And borders where bloomed narcissus sweet,
And the rose-of-Sharon golden.

A sundial stands in that garden old,
Sculptured and fashioned deftly,
That many a year hath silent told
The hours that fly so swiftly.

The budding thyme grows round its foot
With fragrance soft and tender,
And fair white saxifrage, many a root,
With bells on stalklets slender.

The honey-bee shakes the golden-rod,
As he gathers his perfumed treasure,
And tall pink spikes in the sunshine nod,
Where the butterfly sports at pleasure.

And once again as a little child
My feet those walks are treading,
And the skies smile down as then they smiled,
And that sunshine is round me spreading ;—

Those far-off skies, that used to be
As the throne of God in heaven,
The wind that stirred the acacia-tree
His voice in the summer even.

Oh ! lovely garden, Oh ! happy hours
Of childhood's sunny dreaming,
When earth puts forth her sweetest flowers,
And all has brightest seeming.

And who are the forms in that garden fair,
Oh ! who 'mid its flowers are straying ?
Sweet young voices are on the air,
Little feet in its paths are playing.

And some are passing in my dream
Amid the Summer's fragrance,
But dim and shadowy they seem,
Not of this earth their radiance.

For these have garments touched with light,
We scarce can see their faces,
Only in dreams they meet our sight,
They dwell in heavenly places.

Ye that have trod these paths of ours,
That have felt our sunshine o'er ye,
Whose hands have plucked these Summer flowers—
Now passed away to glory—

Fair though these earthly scenes may be,
Fairer by far your dwelling,
'Mid light no mortal eye can see,
That may not know our telling.



AT THE CASTLE OF SAINT ANDREWS.

(Scene of the martyrdom of George Wishart—1546.)

WAVES of the Summer sea, in sunshine breaking
Upon the weed-clad rocks beneath our feet,
With soft and soothing melody awaking
Thoughts where the glad and solemn mingling meet,—

Sing of the hearts with youthful rapture beating,
That from these walls have looked in buoyant mirth,
With smile of joy the morning sunshine greeting,
Feeling how full of beauty is God's earth ;

Watching those waters, with a gentle motion
Rock the long sea-weed branches to and fro,
The sunlit billows of a Summer ocean,
Bright as the hopes that through their bosoms flow.

Waves of a Winter sea, in fury sweeping
Those shelving ridges with your thund'rous roar,
Tell of the stormy times when ye were keeping
A troubled watch around this fortress hoar.

When he, the martyr young and brave, was taken
From out the noisome dungeon's deepest gloom,
To look his last upon this scene, unshaken,
And face with fortitude his fiery tomb.

Stormed ye, or smiled the farewell to him given,
Wild waves of ocean, beating on these scaurs ?
What matter ? for, by fiercest tempest driven,
The bark of Wishart reached the heavenly shores.

Nor distant hence, in hearing of the ocean,
Slumbers another of the blessèd dead,
He who, with ardour of a life's devotion,
Followed his Master wheresoe'er He led :

Who, when his foes to death were well-nigh bringing,
Received a summons from a Higher Hand,
And Rutherford's pure spirit, upward springing,
Beheld the glory of "Immanuel's Land."

Peaceful his grave, the old cathedral keeping
Still watch above him, in her ruined pride,
The moonbeams on the waves beneath him sleeping,
As on his far-off Solway's creeping tide.

The Winter floods around these cliffs are raging,
Rude emblem of his troubled life below,
But he hath reached the calm and quiet haven,
Where fairer waters than his Anwoth's, flow.

Oh, story of these sainted ones departed,
Stir us anew with something of their life,
Faithful to death, the true and noble-hearted,
Who fainted not in such an awful strife.

Strong rocks, that stood unmoved, where fierce rebounded
The angry breakers of that stormy hour,
Upon the living Rock of Ages founded,
Through Him alone they braved the tempest's power.

Bold beacon-fires, that on these shores uplifted,
Flamed forth unflinching o'er those waters dark,
Guiding to safety souls that hopeless drifted,
Saving from ruin Scotland's storm-tossed bark.

Oh! let not us, *their* country's sons and daughters,
Drift on, unheeding of their guiding brand,
Like broken wreckage on the restless waters,
Flung up at last all worthless on the strand!



"AWAKE AND SING, YE THAT DWELL
IN 'THE DUST."

(Isa. xxvi., 19.)

UNDERNEATH the larch's shade,
Where there fell
Flickering lights and shadows, made
By the spell
Of the sun and breeze, I lay
On an early Summer day,
Heard the waters far away
Down the dell.

Damp the moss grew in the nooks
Overhead ;
Trailed the ivy from the rocks ;
Softly spread
All around a dreamy glow ;
Waved the branches to and fro,
As the wind would come and go,
Fancy-led.

And I heard a tiny peal,
Low and clear,
Softest music seemed to steal
'To mine ear,
Not the sound of bird or bee,
Not of stream, or breeze, or tree,
But a gentler melody,
Yet more near.

All among the grass there grew
'Neath the trees,
Flowers of fairest form and hue,
'Twas from these,
From the petals, lightly swung,
Of the hyacinth, that hung
Her blue bells, which softly rung
On the breeze.



And this music seemed to swell,
Faintly heard,
From each tiny swinging bell,
Lightly stirred,—
“ Oh ! a joyous life is ours
With its golden Summer hours,
Breeze and sunshine, dewy showers,
Bee and bird !

“ When the sunny smile of Spring
Warms the air,
Bids the woods awake and sing
Music rare,
Then we burst our Winter tomb,
Cast aside our robes of gloom,
Clothe us in our Summer bloom,
Fresh and fair.

“ To our blossoms sweet and free,
Wild bees throng ;
Oh ! a gladsome life have we
The woods among,
Till the Autumn winds blow cold,
Then our tender buds we fold,
Sink beneath the kindly mould,
The Winter long.

“ And though loud the storm may beat,
Wild and drear,
We, within our safe retreat,
Feel no fear ;
For we know that Winter's sway
Yields to Spring's delicious May,
And to Summer's golden day,
Year by year ! ”

Such their music—it enfolds
Thoughts of faith ;
Thou, whose soul long Winter holds,
Night and death,—
He who bringeth by His might
Life from death, from darkness light,
Holdeth precious in His sight
Thy soul's breath.

He who keeps the Summer flowers
'Neath the sod,
Sees thee in thy darkest hours,
All down-trod,
He, whose hand, with tenderest might,
Bathes with dew and paints with light
These frail creatures, knows *thy* night,
Is *thy* God.

Oh ! thou dweller in the dust,
Lift thine eyes,
Look to Him with holy trust,
Thou shalt rise ;
Look to Him, so will He bring
For *thy* Winter, joyous Spring ;
Thou too shalt awake and sing
To His praise.



THE EVE OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW.

(From the Painting by J. E. Millais, R.A.)

A SUMMER'S eve—upon the wall
The ivy-shadows rise and fall
Now and again, when lightly stirred
By the soft breeze, that scarcely heard,
So low, just lifts the leaves and then
Passes away and comes again,
Touches the bending grass, and now
Dies in the birch-tree's topmost bough.
A time-stained wall, with mouldering stone
By weeds and lichen overgrown,
Which o'er the gateway nigh efface
The 'scutcheon of a noble race.
Two figures stand within its shade,
Close side by side, a youth and maid,
He with a proud and high-born air,
She with a noble face and fair.
With pleading eyes and tear-stained cheeks
Upturned to his, the lady speaks
In earnest tones, that seem to be
Full of despairing energy :—

"The night is almost come," she said,

"The night of agony and dread,

And thou wilt lie among the dead

Ere morrow break !

I will not go, unless thou swear

That thou to-night this scarf wilt wear,

Badge of *my* faith, wilt thou not bear

This, for love's sake ? "

"Nay, tempt me not, oh, love," he said,

"Life of dishonour more I dread

E'en than a place among the dead

To-night who die ;

My faith than life is far more dear ;

Why should I shrink when Death draws near ?

But for *thy* sake, I would not fear

To know him nigh.

But thou ! "—there passed across his face

A look, that, for a moment's space,

Told what deep agony had place

His breast within ;

Fiercely his faith and earthly love

Each against each in battle strove ;

Each seemed by turn his heart to move,

The mastery, win.

"Speak not of Death !" in wild despair

She cried, "'tis but this scarf to wear ;

Were it dishonour but to bear

Badge of *my* faith ? "

Gently he put her hand aside,

"Thou would'st not, then, that I denied

My Lord and King, Who for me died

A cruel death ?

And what is life, oh, love ? " said he,—
" A moment in Eternity !—
A few short years, then must we see
The end of all.
What *then* would all our love avail,
How would thy heart and mine bewail,
If in the battle we should quail
And fear to fall ?

Twice ten more years will then seem nought ;
How shall we marvel, that we thought
So poor a treasure might be bought
At such a cost ?
Think of the endless life that He
Hath given us ; think, belov'd, how we
Richer a thousand-fold shall be
For *this* life lost."

She pressed still closer to his side,
Firmly her falling tears she dried,
" Oh, that thy faith were mine ! " she cried ;
Then answered he,—
" Thou knowest now I could not dare
Dishonoured live, this badge to wear."
She raised her eyes, " Then will I share
Thy *death* with thee."



THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF BIRDS.

Jovous season! glad we hail thee,
Brightest of each passing year,
When, from Winter's sleep awaking,
Into life and beauty breaking,
Once more flowers of Spring appear!

When a melody of gladness
Flows from woods late dark and dumb,
And each tiny bird rejoices
With a thousand kindred voices,
For his singing-time is come.

What the music ye are singing?
Happy birds, we fain would know;
Have ye hearts within you sleeping,
That, at touch of Spring upleaping,
Must with rapture overflow?

Every year's returning Spring-time,
Ye have sung the wonted tune,
From your throats the song is gushing,
On warm winds of Summer rushing
Through the fragrant woods of June;

Where the trickling streamlet waters
Hazel-copse and beechen glade;
In the sunlit cowslip-meadow,
In the cool delicious shadow
Honey-dropping limes have made:

In our ancient island forests,
In the deep, oak-sheltered dells,
Where of old your notes of gladness
Half-o'erpowered the gloomy sadness
Of the Druids' muttered spells:

In the sunny 'Tuscan valleys,
 Or in Thessaly's fair vales,
 'Mid whose olive-groves and myrtles,
 Sit the softly-cooing turtles
 And the warbling nightingales :

 Or from Sharon's plain up-springing,
 When the fig puts forth her bloom,
 And the early vine-buds tender,
 'Mong the rich pomegranate's splendour,
 Shed a delicate perfume.

 Just the songs ye sang in Eden,
 On each young, mist-watered spray ;
 Or the exultant notes ye uttered,
 When on joyful wing ye fluttered
 From the prisoning ark away,—

 When the olive-groves, fresh-budding,
 Wooed you with their tender green,
 While the new earth smiled before ye,
 And new blossoms spread their glory,
 Where but sullen waves had been.

 Patriarch in the fields at even,
 Ruth the barley-sheaves among,
 Israel's shepherd king, returning
 With his flock at early morning
 To the hillsides,—heard your song.

 Yea, how many hearts have gladdened
 At the music that ye sing,
 Through the past and in the present,
 Babe and ancient, prince and peasant,
 English child and Hebrew king !

 Stir *our* souls, oh, happy voices,
 Touch the heart now cold and dumb,
 Say, " Awake to Spring-tide's gladness,
 Christ hath ransomed thee from sadness,
 Let *thy* singing-time be come ! "

DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

Born at Blantyre, Scotland, March 19th, 1813. Died May 4th, 1873.

Buried in Westminster Abbey, April 18th, 1874.

FROM out the grass-roofed hut in far Illala,
Beneath the shadow of the tropic palm,
Where sudden on that life of heat and labour
There settled evening's healing cool and calm ;

When he, who through long years of toil had wandered,
Folded his hands for ever on his breast,
And they who watched him, drawing near with reverence,
Whispered, " The mighty master is at rest " ;

Up from the tangled groves and reedy thickets,
By lake and river's dank and marshy shore,
O'er mountain and o'er plain, 'mid foes and danger,
With faithful hands the cherished form they bore.

Thus many moons had come and gone upon them,
Until at last they reached the longed-for strand,
And then they brought their dead across the ocean,
And laid him down within his fathers' land.

Yes, long and grand the funeral march they gave him,
Those sons of Afric', bringing home their trust,
Like them of old, who through their desert journey
Bore up from Egypt Joseph's treasured dust.

Oh ! traveller from that unknown wild's recesses,
For thee may Britain well her hands outspread,
Well may she seek to give thee noblest burial,
And lay thee with the mighty of her dead.

No warrior thou, borne home from fields of slaughter,
With earthly pride and blood-bought honour crowned ;
But greater far, for deeds of highest daring,
Of mercy, and of Christian love, renowned.

Wails of the vanquished, groans of the despairing,
Mar not the music of thy funeral hymn,
And with no smoke of burning kraal in ruins,
Or lands deserted, is thy glory dim ;

For thou went'st forth to loose the iron fetters,
The spoiler's deeds of darkness to unveil,
And in the spirit of thy Heavenly Master,
The broken-hearted and oppressed to hail.

So, ages hence, when from her shores enlightened
Glad voices peace and liberty proclaim,
Shall Africa thy blessed memory cherish,
And teach her sons this noble white man's name.

And worthy sepulture she too had found thee,
Beside the long-sought fountains of her Nile,
Within the shadow of her ancient mountains,
Or where Marava's silver waters smile.

But fitter that with us thy dust should slumber,
And since two lands must mourn their fallen brave,
'That Afric's hut should be thy funeral chamber
While Britain gives her long-lost son a grave.

Yet wherefore reck where Livingstone is lying ?—
For long before our portals opened wide,
With pomp and state to give those ashes burial,
And lay the dust its kindred dust beside,—

Straight from that lonely hut of pain ascending,
A soul had touched the everlasting shore,
And joyful at the heavenly city's gateway
A spirit entered to go out no more.



THE VOICE OF THE SUMMER WIND.

THE pleasant wind of Summer,
Waving the woodbine spray,
Comes in at the window-casement,
Scented with new-mown hay,
Let us open the casement wider,
To hear what its voice will say.

For, in soft and low-toned music,
To the woodbine flowers it tells
Tales of the woods in Summer,
And the green and mossy dells,
Where the wild bee loves to linger
In the fox-glove's purple bells :—

Of the mountain-lake's cool waters,
Whose ripples rise and sink,
Beside whose reedy margin
The wild deer stoops to drink,
And the birch-tree's silver branches
Droop down to the water's brink.

Upon whose quiet bosom
From her nest among the reeds,
Out through the water-lilies
The coot her small brood leads,
And the trout amid the stillness
Leaps up from 'neath the weeds.

With the ferns o'er the streamlet waving,
Its wandering breath has played,
And fanned the cool recesses
Of the quiet forest-glade,
Where the timid ringdove murmurs
From out the leafy shade.

It has swept across the ocean,
Tossing the curling foam,
Driving the small waves onward,
And wafting the fisher home,
While, borne across the waters,
Glad, welcoming voices come.

And it seems to shed a fragrance
From forests far away,
Where the shining-winged cicada
Makes music all the day,
And the humming-bird and firefly
Rock on the myrtle-spray.

It has touched the lotus-blossoms
By Afric's lonely lake,
Where the wild gazelles, at sunset,
Gather their thirst to slake,
And a thousand bright-winged creatures
Melodious music make.

Rustling amid the palm-trees
By far-off tropic seas,
Scattering the fragrant blossoms
Of Ischia's orange-trees,
Or from Tuscan valleys bearing
The reapers' melodies,—

Ever its low-toned music
Sounds through the leafy bowers,
Ever it seems to murmur
Of Summer's fairest hours,
Ever its voice is telling
Of sunshine, birds, and flowers.



THE EVE OF THE DELUGE.

(Royal Scottish Academy, 1867.)

A SULTRY tropic calm,
The heavy heat of noon's unclouded sky,
No air to stir the branches of the palm,
Unmoved their shadows lie.

Euphrates' distant stream
Makes drowsy murmur on the reedy shore,
The drooping oleanders silent dream
The golden waters o'er.

The panther in the shade
Moves listless limbs to gambol with her young ;
And birds, in snowy, sun-touched plumes arrayed,
Hover the flowers among :

Those gorgeous tropic flowers,
Whose fearless gaze can face the burning sky,—
But who are these, reclined in scented bowers,
On beds of ivory ?—

Music and wine are theirs,
Pleasure, and dreamy indolence and ease ;
They will not hear the warning that declares,
“ Death is the end of these.”

God is not in their thought,
With impious lips they mock the righteous few,
And thus, by words with bitter scorning fraught,
Defy the Almighty too.

“ All things unaltered stand,
Where is your threatened coming woe ? ” they cry :
They know not that Destruction waits at hand,
That Death itself is nigh.

The Lord hath waited long,
But now His vengeance shall no longer sleep,
Behold, He comes, ten thousand saints among,
The judgment-hour to keep.

Sounds there no warning loud?
Comes there no sign to rouse the dreamers' fears?
Lo! where far-off a little rising cloud,
From out the sea, appears!

But now the hour is come,
The faithful few have left those death-doomed men;
The Lord Himself hath called His servants home,
The door is shut,—what then?

Then came the rush of rain,
The mighty fountains of the deep were broke,
Euphrates from his slumber on the plain
To tumult wild awoke.

A cry of great despair!
The roar of waters battling for their prey;
They *would* not know, until the flood was there,
And swept them all away.

Oh! lesson full of awe,
None need thy solemn teaching more than we,
Like swift destruction as our fathers saw,
What if *our* eyes should see?

The Lord shall come again,
The day and hour are hid from mortal eyes;
Behold, He cometh with a countless train,
To hold the Great Assize.

Oh! watch we then and pray
That we may 'scape the judgments of His hand,
And be accounted worthy on that day
Before the Lord to stand.



THE TOMB OF THEMISTOCLES.

WHERE on Achaia's classic shore
Murmurs the blue Ægean wave,
By ancient Salamis watched o'er,
There lies a lonely, rock-hewn grave.

No sheltering marble tells the deeds
Of him who once was laid below ;
But, round its mouth, the fringing weeds
Rock in the water to and fro.

Long since, the entering waves have swept
Its ashes to far-distant seas ;
But once within its shadow slept
The dust of great Themistocles.

Westward, Morea's mountains lie
In misty blue, across the bay,
Fair-outlined on the Summer sky,
And melt in golden light away.

Behind,—the city of his love,
Athens, in ruined glory lies ;
Around,—her changeless hills ; above,—
The light of her unfaded skies.

Still o'er Hymettus' summit moves
The sunset's golden smile of peace ;
And still Cephissus' olive-groves
Make murmur to the wind of Greece.

Here, close beside the waters bright,
By him from tyrant Persia won,
Victorious Salamis in sight,
Athens had laid her hero down.

No need of stone his name to hold ;
The murmur of her Summer seas
For ages to the rocks hath told
The fame of great Themistocles.

But not alone thy warrior's fame,
Or sage's light, now dimmed and fled,
Athens, makes thine a deathless name,
Thou city of the mighty dead !

A greater hero than thy son,
A nobler foot thy streets hath trod,—
He who with fearless voice made known
The glory of thine "Unknown God."

Columns and ruined temples rise,
Thy great Acropolis to crown,
And, gleaming 'neath those cloudless skies,
On Mars' deserted hill look down.

But to *its* rocks and sun-beat earth
A far-surpassing honour clings ;
Here Paul before the world stood forth,
As servant of the King of Kings ;

Despised amid the wise of Greece,
And yet in living wisdom skilled,
Among her warriors clothed with peace,
Poor, but with heavenly treasure filled.

The Kingdom that he preached shall spread,
When Greece and all her great are gone ;
The Ancient One of days its head,
Cast down before Him every throne.

THE UPAS-TREE—A DREAM.

METHOUGHT I saw a garden very fair,
That spread its glowing treasures to the sun ;
On every verdant slope and gay parterre,
There grew each blossom bright to look upon,
Roses and myrtles, lilies of Saint John,
The hyacinth and jasmine's starry flowers,
Luxuriant eastern creepers, every one
Born 'neath a sky where endless Summer showers
Her flowery wealth on Ind' and Afric's sun-lit bowers.

And, all around, the liquid sunshine played
On every shrub most delicate and rare ;
Mimosas, in their tender green arrayed,
Hung out their golden tassels ; white and fair
The daphne's clusters scented all the air,
While o'er the trees there clomb the clustering vine ;
And the soft shadows gently linger, where
The passion-flowers their clasping tendrils twine
With honeysuckle-branch and waving eglantine.

Here would the wild bee come, and 'mong the flowers
Hum through the noontide of the Summer-day ;
The nightingale, amid the laurel-bowers,
Trill through the dewy hours his passioned lay ;
The turtle here would dream her life away,
And coo her love-plaint to the woods anear,
Or dip her wing into the fountain's spray ;
All notes of joyous song-birds soothed the ear,
Shy creatures sported round, without a thought of fear.

There Lebanon's proud cedars spread their shade,
Wafting an orient perfume wide around ;
The light wind through the orange-branches strayed,
And strewed their fragrant petals on the ground ;
While on the air there came the murmuring sound
Of the clear waters leaping to the light ;
All goodly was, within that garden's bound ;
There lacked not aught might please the gladdened sight,
Or fill the raptured ear with exquisite delight.

.

Methought I looked again,—a change profound

Had passed upon the garden once so fair ;

An enemy had set, within its bound,

A upas-tree, a tender sapling there,

Ah ! woeful sight within a place so rare !

Yet long it was, before its leaves had power

With poisoned breath to taint the Summer air,

And long it grew, scarce seen amid the bower ;

But firmly rooted now, a mighty tree did tower.

And, from its shade, there slowly fell a blight

On every plant once beautiful to view,

The roses, erst all redolent and bright,

Dejected hung their heads, of Death's pale hue ;

The lilies' stems were bent, the myrtles grew

All leafless, and their starry blossoms fled ;

The shrubs no more drank in the evening dew,

But drooping stood, all dank and withered,

And the proud cedar's leaves all mournfully were shed.

Destruction came upon the orange-bowers,

Gone was their fragrance, and no more the bee

Went forth to hum among the Summer flowers ;

Hushed was each glad bird's voice of melody,

And e'en the fountain's gushing song of glee

Seemed changed to plaint of melancholy mood ;

Ye well may deem what woe it was, to see

All desolate the place once fair and good,

Where death and silence now o'er the bright garden brood.

And there *it* reigned alone, that noxious tree,

'Mid all the bale its presence there had wrought ;—

Then much I wept, to think what misery

One tree had on the happy garden brought ;

When, in the vision, in mine ear, methought,

A voice said, “Yea, but if thou mourn'st to note

The ruin from one plant with poison fraught,

What, in the *soul's* fair garden, is the fruit,

Save blight and death, that springs from *Sin's* destructive root ?”



THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE AT NÎMES.

SILENT the great arena lies :
All round, its stone-built seats uprise
In mighty circling tiers :
The blue of heaven overhead,
Where once rich canopies were spread,
A high pavilion rears.

Gray vault, and arch, and colonnade,
Where sculptor's skilful hand hath played,
And, ever hour by hour,
Time's strokes, soft-falling, have effaced
The lines by art and fancy traced,
With slow but certain power.

Oh ! hoary relic of the past,
A might to stir the soul thou hast ;
Thy silent mouldering stones
Have yet a voice for him who hears ;
From depths of nigh two thousand years
They speak in solemn tones.

We look around, and see again
The thronging hosts of living men
That once were gathered here ;
Those empty seats are filled, and loud
An eager, cruel, surging crowd
The blood-stained victors cheer.

Again the weak draw anguished breath,
Strong men are wrestling hard with death
In fierce and savage form ;
The shriek of rage, the wail of pain
Re-echo through these vaults in vain,—
Wild passion's awful storm.

Here is the Roman matron seen,
With unblenched lip, and stern of mien,
Viewing the hideous strife ;
The while her cruel hands forbear
The signal that hath power to spare
The prostrate victim's life.

Yea, and the Christian martyr's blood
From this arena cried to God :—
E'en here the enfranchised soul
By painful strift set free from pain,
Bursting with sudden wrench the chain,
Sprang forward to the goal.

But still a sterner thought ye wake,
Grey ruins, to our sight ye make
A mightier vision press,—
This world, the vast arena-ground ;
Ourselves the wrestlers ; all around,
A host of witnesses.

And who are they that view the strife ?
They who once battled hard for life
With fiercest unseen foes,
Triumphant fought the fight of faith,
Victors through Him who vanquished death,
And more than conquerors rose.

Oh ! spirits with the martyr's crown,
Who from your heavenly seats look down
On us who wrestle here ;
Ye who have passed through pangs untold,
How must ye marvel, to behold
Our languor, sloth, and fear !

We wrestle not with flesh and blood,
But with the powers they too withstood,
Where are *our* zeal and faith ?
Up ! then, and gird us for the strife,
The prize is everlasting life,
Its loss is endless death.

THE BARDS OF BRESSAY.

Two rocks off the coast of the Shetland Isles.

(*Royal Scottish Academy*, 1872.)

WHERE loud the northern billows beat,
And deep, opposing currents meet
In ceaseless wash around their feet,

Arise The Bards of Bressay,—
Two giant rocks, that, side by side,
And sundered from the mainland wide,
For ages braving wind and tide,
Uplift their heads together.

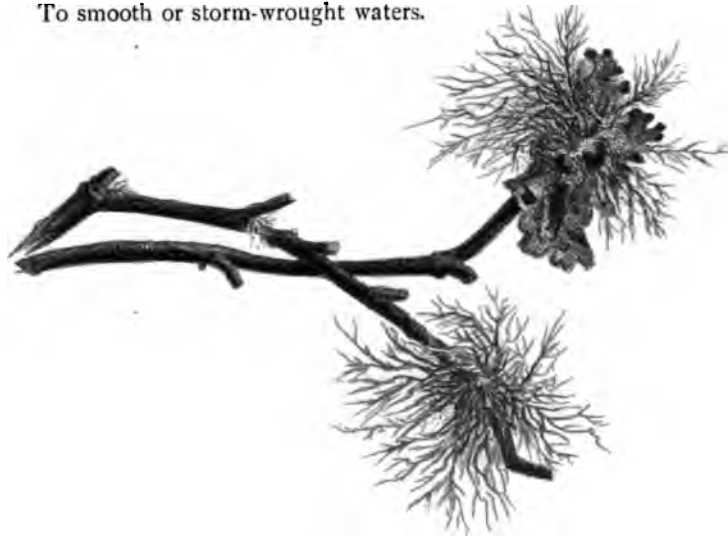
Oh! varied are the tones that flow
From the wild organ-pipes they blow,
Wrought by the surging floods below,—

Those mighty Bards of Bressay.
They guard a rude, rock-girded coast ;
There many a ship drives tempest-tost,
And many a goodly bark is lost,
Where sound their dirge-like voices.

Woe to the sailor, who may be
In stormy sunset out at sea,
And hear their music on his lee,
Those cruel Bards of Bressay :
Through cloud and mist he sees them loom,
They tell him of a certain doom,
He hears their hoarse death-anthems boom,
'Mid wind and waters' wailing.

But, when light Summer breezes blow,
And warm the sunlit ripples flow,
They raise their music soft and low,
The sweet-voiced Bards of Bressay.
Then may the fisher, in the calm,
Beneath the Summer midnight's balm,
Hear a faint-whispered plaintive psalm
Across the waters stealing.

He knows that deep and tender note,
 And gently turns his rocking boat,
 To catch the liquid airs that float
 Forth from the Bards of Bressay.—
 But those stern rocks, unmoved for aye,
 Amid the never-ceasing spray,
 Care not what melody they play,
 To smooth or storm-wrought waters.



JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA.

Now at last was come the mournful evening
 Of the world's most memorable day,
 Day of mighty signs, rent rocks, and earthquake,
 Opened graves, and visions of dismay :

Day of noontide sun in blackness shrouded,
 Moving onward through the troubled sky,
 And that awful three hours' darkness, ending
 With the dying Saviour's piercing cry :

When the priest beside the altar standing,
 With his gaze toward the holiest bent,
 Saw the veil that hid that inner chamber,
 Suddenly from top to bottom rent :

And the great High Priest, that moment rending
Veil of flesh, for our lost sakes put on,—
Passing through the heaven of heavens resplendent,
Stood for us beside the Almighty's throne.

But below, that form so late in anguish
On the cross now lifeless hung at rest,
While the watching women drawing nearer
Round those piercèd feet with weeping prest.

“Who,” they thought, “will touch our Master's body?
Who will bear Him from the cross away?
Where, and how shall burial be found Him?
Must rough soldier-hands defile His clay?”

“Soon will evening shadows gather round us,
Soon draws on the coming of the night,
And with haste His foes will seek to bury
Our belovèd dead from out our sight!”

.
One, like them, had stood afar beholding,
One who loved, yet sought his love to hide,
Now, in hour of darkest gloom and sorrow,
Love gave strength to cast all fear aside.

Straightway Pilate's judgment-hall he entered,
Fearlessly the name of Jesus named,
Boldly there before the Roman standing,
He the body of his Master claimed.

Thou hast earned a deathless honour, Joseph,
Honourable councillor, indeed,—
Never courage won reward more noble,
Never prayer obtained a costlier meed.

Pilate gave him leave, and Joseph lifted
From the cross his blessèd Master down;
In his own new rock-hewn tomb he laid Him,
In the garden near the hostile town.

Purest linen wrapped the Saviour's body,
Costly spices precious odour made,
Loving hands have given Him reverent burial,
Weeping eyes beheld where He was laid.

All is ended, evening's calm is reigning,
Now that sun of pain and woe hath set,
And the rising moon, in Paschal splendour,
Sivers all the crest of Olivet.

What were then thy thoughts, as slow returning
'Neath the city-wall thy footsteps trod,
Pious Israelite, with many another,
Waiting for the kingdom of thy God?—

Have all thy hopes been quenched this day in darkness?
Fear not, for dawn shall yet succeed the night.

Yea, and long since, thine eyes beheld His glory,
Long since thy heart was raptured by His sight.

Ours be thy courage, noble-hearted Joseph,
In this our day of darkness and of dread,
To own the Crucified, 'mid all denial,
Though round us many cry, "The Christ is dead."

That in this hour of deepening gloom and shadow,
When unbelief would fain His glory dim,
Our hearts may cry, "Him only, and none other,
If they could slay Him, we would trust in *Him*."



FERNS FROM THE FOOT OF THE PYRENEES.

To our stranger-land transplanted
From your far-off Southern home,
Ferns, your fragile forms of beauty
Bid our willing fancy roam
To the copses and the meadows whence ye come ;

Where these tiny fronds, unfolding
'Neath a soft and cloudless sky,
First the Summer light beholding
Caught the beauty of their dye,
Daily moulding to a perfect symmetry.

There your screen of richest weaving
Fringed the margin of the wells,
By your side the crocus budded,
Heather hung her purple bells,
Gentians blossomed, and the golden asphodels.

Ye recall the landscape, resting
In that radiant evening light,
When I first beheld your birthplace,
Felt your snow-topt mountains' might,—
Holy city, bursting on the pilgrims' sight !

For a veil of heavenly glory
On their shining summits lay,
And the listening soul might hearken
What the voice of God would say,
As in Eden walking in the cool of day.

But far other sights ye witness,
Dwellers by the ancient hills,
When the thunder-cloud descending
Every mountain streamlet fills,
And to torrents turns a hundred silver rills.

When the angry Winter tempest
 Rending mighty rocks and trees,
Through the mountain-passes bursting
 With the thunder of the seas,
Wakes the echoes of the storm-swept Pyrenees.

When the midnight lightning-flashes
 Pierce the blackness of the scene ;
All those splintered peaks up-heaving,
 Every shattered rift between,
Fling their outlines on a dark and lurid screen.

But each vision, soft or awful,
 Or in sunshine, or in night,
Is but where the great Creator
 Walks in majesty and might,
And all Nature speaks in parables of light.

So the clear, rejoicing raindrops,
 When again the sun shines warm,
From your tender leaflets shaken,
 To the listening ear may form
Still small voices, after earthquake, fire, and storm.



"A CUP OF COLD WATER."

(Matt. x. 42.)

"The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty."—Isaiah xxi. 14.

IN the wild Arabian desert,
In that dry and thirsty land,
Lay a traveller spent and weary,
Prone upon the scorching sand.

Not a palm-tree lent its shadow,
Not a sheltering rock was nigh,
Fiercely smote the sun upon him,
From a hot and cloudless sky :

Not a single blade of herbage
Showed on all that barren ground,
Drop of dew, nor spring of water,
Dreary desert spread around.

Spent the water in his bottle,
Lay he at the point of death,
Near him crouched his camel, gasping
In the fierce sirocco's breath.

Must he perish here deserted,
None his lonely fate to tell?
Hark ! from far comes faintly, faintly,
Sound of journeying camels' bell.

On they come across the desert,
Merchantmen, a travelling band ;—
They have found the fainting stranger,
They have raised him from the sand.

Speedily from off their camels
Swelling water-skins they take,
And they pour the blessed water,
Thirst of man and beast to slake.

Life thrills through the failing pulses,
Of the cooling draught he sips ;
Who can tell its priceless value
To those parched and burning lips !

Then refreshed he journeys onward,
To the spot where he may greet
Wife and child, now weary watching
For his lingering camel's feet.

Blessed deed ! our hearts responsive
Hail the act of mercy done,
In that "cup of water," given
To revive the dying one.

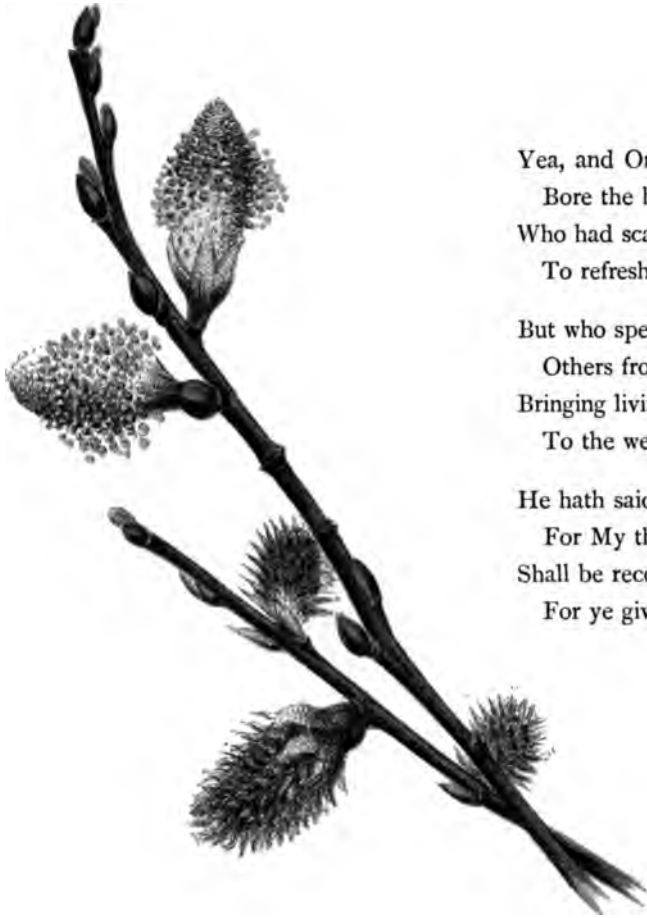
Round *us* spreads a dreary desert,
Fainting souls all lonely lie,
Thirsting ones and sorely smitten,
Scorched by sin and doomed to die :

Souls the living water needing,
Sorrow-wounded unto death,
To the dust their spirits cleaving,
'Neath temptation's fiery breath.

Hasting through *this* thirsty desert,
Through this world by sin accurst ;
Who will, like the men of Tema,
Water bring to them that thirst ?

Who will to the weak and stricken
Stretch a pitying hand to aid ?
Who deny himself a moment,
That the deadly plague be stayed ?

Words of kindness, deeds of mercy,
Works of self-denying love,
Are as draughts of cooling water,
Or as dew dropped from above.



Yea, and One who through this desert
Bore the burden and the heat,
Who had scarce a drop of water
To refresh His way-worn feet,—

But who spent His life in raising
Others from the barren ground,
Bringing living draughts and healing
To the weary souls He found,—

He hath said, “A cup of water
For My thirsty brethren poured,
Shall be recompensed in heaven,
For ye give it to their Lord !”

A TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE MOON.

THE moon hath risen fair,
Full-orbed and clear she mounts the eastern sky,
The clouds melt at her radiant presence, where
She walks in light on high.

Sudden, the faintest veil
Begins to dull the glory of her rim ;
It spreads, it deepens, till her face is pale,
Slowly her light grows dim.

The shadow settling cold
Enwraps her radiance, like a smoky shroud ;
Now,—moving through the darkened heavens, behold
The moon is “turned to blood.”

Strange and mysterious hour !
Well may the savage tremble at the sight,
Deeming the terrors of some unseen Power
Prepared the world to smite.

Yea, priests and mighty kings
Of old have named such scene with quivering lips,
And felt the shaking of earth's firmest things,
Before like dark eclipse.

But now with calmer eye,
Yet still with awe, we view this glorious sight,
And think how many thousands to the sky
Have turned their gaze to-night.

The Arab of the Nile
Hath marked the wonder from his desert sand ;
And dwellers in the far-off ocean isle
By Afric's eastern strand.

On shores where tropic ray
Warms the bright waters in their ebb and flow ;
And where the creeping shadow turned to gray
Siberia's wastes of snow ;—

Eachwhere, the spirit feels
The awful mystery of this midnight hour,
Wherein the mighty God once more reveals
His glorious arm of power ;—

His arm, that launched the earth
To hold her path, according to His will,
And sent the stars upon their courses forth,
His *fiat* to fulfil.

And in His wondrous plan
Sight of transcendent glory shall be given,
When *every eye* shall see the Son of Man
Come in the clouds of heaven.

MOSES' SONG OF TRIUMPH.

I WILL sing to the Lord, He hath gloriously triumphed,
The horse and his rider are drowned in the sea ;
The Lord is my strength and my song and salvation,
The God of my fathers exalted shall be.

The Lord is a warrior, His name is Jehovah ;
The chariots of Pharaoh, his captains are gone,
The Red Sea hath swallowed the host of his horsemen,
The depths have o'erwhelmed them, they sank as a stone.

Thy right hand, Jehovah, alone doeth wonders,
Thy right hand, Jehovah, hath scattered Thy foes ;
The might of Thy glory hath dashed them in pieces,
The host of the people against Thee that rose.

The sea saw Thy coming, the great depths were troubled,
The billows stood upright, and rose as an heap ;
With the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered,
The floods were congealed in the heart of the deep.

The enemy said, " I will haste and o'ertake them,
My hand shall rejoice in the spoil of the slain !"—
Thou didst blow with Thy wind, and the floods overthrew them,
They sank in the waters, they rose not again.

For who in the heaven is like Thee, Jehovah ?
What son of the mighty is like unto Thee ?
Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises,—
Thy right arm hath silenced the rage of the sea.

In Thy mercy and power, Thou dost lead forth Thy people,
The sound of Thy coming the nations shall hear ;
The nobles of Edom, the mighty of Moab,
Amazement shall seize them, all Canaan shall fear.

Palestina shall know, and her princes shall tremble,
They, too, shall be silent and still as a stone,
Till Thy people, oh, Lord, till Thy people pass over,
The tribes Thou hast purchased to make them thine own.

Thou shalt guide them in peace to the land Thou hast chosen,
To the place where Thy glory shall rest and remain,
To the mountain, oh, Lord, which Thy hands have established;
Jehovah for ever and ever shall reign !

For the chariots of Pharaoh went in with his horsemen,
And the sea flowed again where the billows had stood,
But the Children of Israel marched through the waters,
They went on dry land in the midst of the flood.

Then Israel's daughters, with timbrels uplifted,
Went forth in their dances the chorus to be,
And Miriam answered that many-voiced chorus,
With timbrel resounding, exultant and free,
"Oh, sing to the Lord, He hath gloriously triumphed,
The horse and his rider are drowned in the sea !"



DONATI'S COMET, 1858.

To the far realms of boundless space,
Where sceptred Silence holds her sway,
Again thou wingest from this earth
Comet, thy lone and trackless way ;
Where dim-lit Neptune with his moons
In gloomy grandeur rolleth on,
Or where still-undiscovered worlds
Move in long ages round the sun.
Since last this world beheld thy light,
Thrones and dominions have decayed,
Nations arisen, lived, and died,
And empires in the dust been laid.
When was thy flaming form *first* seen,
Portentous in the troubled sky,
Proclaiming to an awe-struck world
The woes and terrors drawing nigh ?
Did *thy* torch light Euphrates' flood,
When the dread writing on the wall
Foretold, in characters of flame,
The Babylonian empire's fall ?
When, startled from his impious feast,
Belshazzar found his kingdom gone,
And heard the Persian army's tread
Sounding through fallen Babylon.
Didst thou lead on the gleaming host
Of meteors flashing through the gloom,
With tongues of fire that boded forth
Rebellious Zion's awful doom ?
Didst thou the carnage there behold,
When conquering legions like a flood
On through the fated city rolled,
And all her glory quenched in blood ?

Or didst thou, ages after, point,
With flaming finger, to *her* doom,—
Once every trembling nation's dread,—
The world's proud mistress, mighty Rome?

When all the blood that she had spilt,
And trampled peoples' tears of woe,
Came down in vengeance on her head,
And Rome's dominion was brought low.

Before thy portent, kings have quailed,
And empires tottered to their fall,
For famine, war, and death were deemed
To rise obedient to thy call.

But for *our* sight, thy flaming pen
Inscribes, upon a mighty scroll,
His glorious power who made each orb
In its appointed path to roll :

At whose omnipotent behest
His yearly race each planet runs,
Who binds Orion's gleaming belt,
And guides Arcturus with his sons :

At whose command the floods break forth,
And whirlwind hastens o'er the sea,
His thunder speaks with mighty voice,
And lightnings answer, " Here are we ! "

Who holds the treasures of the snow,
The limits of the deep hath laid,
" Thus far, no further, shall thou go,
Here shall thy haughty waves be stayed ! "

When ages shall have come and fled,
And next thou shinest in our sky,
Will the long reign of sin be past,
Will those great thousand years be nigh,

When all the Kingdoms of this world
The Kingdoms of our Lord shall be,
His glory cover all the earth,
As the wide waters fill the sea ?



AN INCIDENT IN THE LEBANON MASSACRE
OF 1860.

THE western sides of Lebanon
Lie in a purple glow,
The sunset's dreamy light o'erspreads
The Great Sea stretched below,
And out through bars of orange clouds,
The parting sunbeams flow.

The home-returning goat-herd's song
Sounds from the mountain side,
And dark-haired flocks come winding down
The crags, this eventide,
Unto a hundred little towns
'Mid mulberry-groves that hide.

Peaceful and calm the valleys lie
That run among the hills,
Clothed with the olive's silver green,
Watered by leaping rills ;
Peaceful and calm the mountain-tops,
And peace our spirit fills.

Yet here, but few short years ago,
We saw the setting sun,
Scarce hoping we should live to know
Another day begun,
A dreadful death seemed drawing near,
And earthly hope was none.

For fearful tidings of despair
Had come at early morn,
To slaughter every Christian soul
The Druses fierce had sworn,
Man rose 'gainst man, in bloody strife
Of pride and hatred born.

All day, the villages around
Were wrapt in smoke and flame,
And, thronging to our sheltering roof,
Widows and orphans came,
'Lorn fugitives, whose hope of life
Lay in our English name.

But as those awful hours wore on,
We heard a tumult loud,
Our townsmen arming 'gainst the foe
Voices that vengeance vowed,—
Then went we forth into the streets
And faced that angry crowd.

And there we raised our hearts to God
That He by us would stand,
Would make the raging of this sea
Be still at His command,
E'en as He rides upon the floods
And binds them with His hand.

We told them that the God we served
His mighty power revealed
As stronger than the battle-bow
Or war-horse in the field ;
And that He bids us trust His arm,
Nor rest in spear and shield.

We told them of the peace of those
Believing in His word,
Until upon that stormy throng
A calm fell from the Lord ;
And ere the evening's sun went down
Each man had sheathed his sword.

Then to the house-top went we up,
The house-tops all below
Were thronged with those who watched in dread
For what the night would show ;
And to our ears came smothered cries,
And sobs, and wails of woe.

The burning glare against the sky
A fierce aurora made,
Between us and the flaming towns
The fir-trees cast their shade,
The pines and olives stood around,
In awful gloom arrayed.

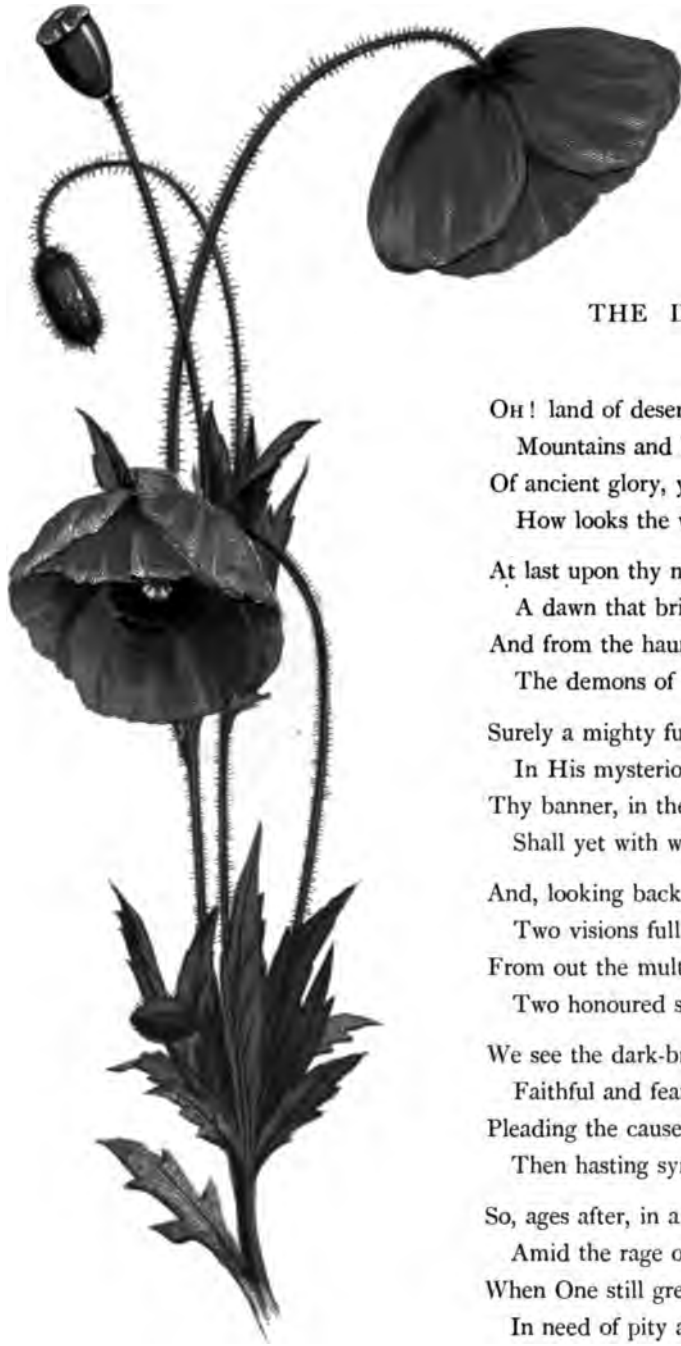
Then rose our cry from trembling hearts,
Not for ourselves alone,
But for those terror-stricken souls,
Each to its Maker known ;
And still, responsive to our prayers,
Came up their anguished moan.

Up to the mountain-tops we looked,
Wild was the midnight sky,
But through the blackness and the glare
Our spirits pressed on high,
And in the gloom, the eye of faith
Met God's all-seeing eye.

Beneath its light we seemed to see
His hosts the darkness fill,
We felt Elisha's God from fear
Protects His people still,
Horses and chariots of fire
Were round us on the hill.

In His own hour, the Lord of hosts
His captives could release,
The tumult of the people calm,
And bid their raging cease ;
And on our spirits through that night
There fell a holy peace.

And so for many days we watched,
God kept us free from harm,
We found our refuge and our strength
His everlasting arm,
Until, the storm of death swept by,
We rested from alarm.



THE DARK CONTINENT.

OH! land of deserts and of mighty rivers,
Mountains and lakes, and ever-circling sea,
Of ancient glory, yet of heathen darkness,
How looks the world with wonder upon thee!

At last upon thy night the dawn arises,
A dawn that brightens swiftly into day;
And from the haunts where they till now were worshipped,
The demons of the midnight flee away.

Surely a mighty future lies before thee,
In His mysterious plan who rules the world;
Thy banner, in the mustering of the nations,
Shall yet with wondrous glory be unfurled.

And, looking back along the distant ages,
Two visions full of promise meet our eyes;
From out the multitude who pass before us,
Two honoured sons of Africa arise.

We see the dark-browed Ebed-melech standing
Faithful and fearlessly before the King,
Pleading the cause of God's imprisoned servant,
Then hasting sympathy and aid to bring.

So, ages after, in a crowded city,
Amid the rage of Pilate's multitude,
When One still greater than the Hebrew prophet,
In need of pity and of succour stood,

Again was Africa by God remembered,
Again among her sons the choice was made:
On Simon the Cyrenian's swarthy shoulder
The Saviour's cross was, full of honour, laid.

Oh, Africa! through centuries of darkness,
Oppressed, despised, by other lands accurst,
Thou who hast long been last among the nations,
Soon shall He number thee among the first.

Arise and shine! His glory is upon thee;
Rise from the dust, for He hath loosed thy bands;
He calls thy myriad dusky sons and daughters,
And lo! the chains fall from their lifted hands.

Even as a garden which the Lord hath planted,
That putteth out her bud and yields perfume,
So shalt thou yet spring forth among the nations,
And righteousness and praise shall be thy bloom.



THE CHILDREN OF ONAS.

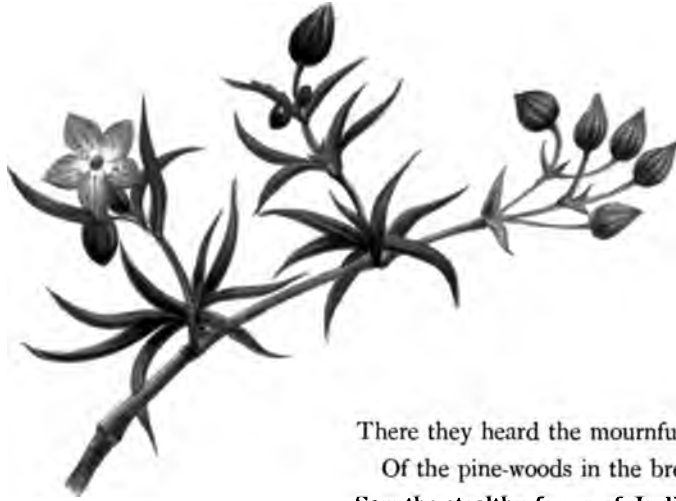
*"Onas," the Red Indians' word for a quill or pen, was their translation
of the name of Penn the founder of Pennsylvania.*

BREEZES from the woods of Summer,
Murmur of the rippling sea,
Come, and with your soothing music
Set my wakening fancy free.

Touch mine inner sight, and gently
Breathe enchantment in mine ears;
Bid my spirit wander backward
To those dim and distant years,

When, for sake of conscience, banished
From their loved and native land,
Sons and daughters of our people
Sought a far-off foreign strand:

Left the pleasant home of childhood,
All that Nature holds most blest;
Crossed the dreary, storm-swept ocean
To the regions of the West.



There they heard the mournful sighing
Of the pine-woods in the breeze,
Saw the stealthy forms of Indians
Moving 'mong the grass and trees :

Heard strange birds and unknown insects
Break the silence of the woods,
And the wild-wolf's bark at midnight
Sounding through the solitudes.

Yet to them that land of exile
Did a Promised Land become,
Where a Father's hand had guided
To a peaceful earthly home ;

Where arose the settler's cabin,
And, 'mid English products fair,
Indian corn with silken tassels
Waved upon the sunny air.

Men of peace, of loving spirit,
Full of faith, why need they fear,
Though the whoop of the Red Indian
Sounded in the pine-woods near ?

Resting in His sure protection,
Who doth still His people guard,
Peacefully they slept and safely,
With their cabin-doors unbarred.

Peacefully their God they worshipped
In those solitudes apart ;
And the voice of the Great Spirit
Through them reached the Indian's heart.

Never did the roaming savage
Do the Quaker aught but good,
He had vowed to "Onas' children"
A perpetual brotherhood.

And when, roused by wrong to vengeance,
Other white men's blood he shed,
Burned their homes, and round their dwellings
War's dark desolation spread,—

Then by Indian's hand a token
Planted, the white feather waved
O'er the Quaker's humble roof-tree,
And his home from ruin saved.

For the Lord in whom he trusted
Honours those who honour Him,
And the light He gives His servants
Through the ages burns not dim.

In our day, the same great lesson
Echoes from the far-off seas,
Where the wild Pacific billows
Girdle the New Hebrides.

There, as in those western forests,
God, by His almighty power,
Safely kept His faithful servant
Through the fiercest danger's hour :

Stayed the murderous hand uplifted,
Shielded from a cruel death,
Sent His whirlwind forth in blessing,
Answering the prayer of faith.

Is that Arm Almighty shortened ?
Shall its signs and wonders cease ?
Nay, Jehovah rules the nations,
He will give His people peace.

“THE EARLY RAIN.”

“Thou visitest the earth, and after Thou hast made it thirsty, Thou waterest it abundantly.”—French version of Psalm lxx. 9.

THE mountains of the Holy Land
Are lying grey and bare ;
Where is the beauty of her plains,
Her fruitful pastures, where ?

Grass for her cattle there is not,
Her fields deserted stand,
No flower puts forth its tender bud,
It is a thirsty land ;

And now the time of joy is come,
The Winter showers are poured,
Soon every barren waste shall bloom
Like garden of the Lord.

He visiteth the longing earth,
He watereth her hills,
The hand that made the land to thirst
Now every fountain fills.

The valleys, late all parched and dry
That tarried for the rain,
Now send their floods of blessing forth
To glad the thirsty plain.

The streams that made her valleys glad,
Through drought no longer run,
But empty water-courses lie
Beneath the Autumn sun.

And every empty torrent-bed
And every withered plain
Upward with fainting longing look,
And wait the coming rain.



The streams come gushing from the rocks,
They leap the hills adown,
And thousand erewhile barren nooks
Bright tufts of verdure crown.

The tiny runlets in the clefts
Cause moss and thyme to grow,
The ferns uncurl their tender sprays
To catch the waters' flow.

The cyclamen puts forth her buds,
The golden crocus blooms,
The fair narcissus bends her head,
And spreads her sweet perfumes.

Oh, glorious miracle of God !—
But when shall we behold
Like wonder on these barren hearts,
Thine Israel of old ?

Thou visitest the thirsty earth,
Thou waterest her hills.
Turn *their* captivity, oh Lord,
Like these rejoicing rills.

.

And if God clothe the barren earth,
And make her wastes to sing,
Will He not to the thirsting soul
His full salvation bring ?

Ye fainting ones that long for Him
Like dry and parchèd plain,
Praise Him who makes your souls to thirst,—
And tarry for His rain.

He satisfies the longing soul,
On you shall soon be poured
His showers of blessing, ye shall bloom
Like garden of the Lord.



A SPRING SONG.

(*In Memoriam E.T.*, 1870.)

FROM copse and hedge cover,
Our joyous isle over,
A murmur of gladness the sunny air brings,—
Winds' laughter, beholding
The leaf-buds unfolding,
Wild notes of rejoicing, a flutter of wings ;

Warm rain-drops descending
Their low music lending,
To soften the chorus that swells glad and gay,
The full tone that gushes
From black-bird and thrushes,
The wren's tiny twitter, the lark's liquid lay.

The snow of the mountains
Melts down in soft fountains,
The Winter is over, the Summer at hand ;
The flowers are up-springing,
All wood-birds are singing,
“The voice of the turtle is heard in the land.”

Soon, busy and merry
On pear-tree and cherry,
The finches will twitter, the honey-bees hum,
And, bursting their prison
Like spirits new risen,
On wings richly blazoned bright butterflies come.

But hark ! deeper ringing
Than Nature's glad singing,
A sweeter song reacheth the soul's listening ear,
In soft tones, but certain,
It pierces the curtain
Concealing the land that is far off yet near.

The land of the blessèd,
For ever possessèd
By those whom the Saviour redeemed with His blood ;
That song which comes faintly,
Borne in to us gently,
Is sung by the voice of that great multitude.

They welcome the spirit,
New-born to inherit
The realm of the holy, the kingdom of God,—
“ In glorious adorning
Rise, son of the morning,
Come, enter the courts by the seraphim trod.

Earth's sun beaming splendour,
Her moon's rays more tender,
No longer shall light thee, the Lord is thy Sun ;
Eternity's glory
Is rising before thee,
The day never-ending, for thee hath begun !”



THE EMPTY PILLION.



To Monthly Meeting, on his nag,
In Monthly Meeting trim,
Went the good elder, Daniel Brown,
His wife along with him.

Their farm was up among the dales,
Not far from York's old town,
And wide renowned, the country round,
Was worthy Martha Brown.

Her bonnet was most orthodox,
Her dress of home-spun made,
And Daniel was from head to foot
Most Friendlily arrayed.

'Twas in those good old times when wives,—
Oh, much to be admired!—
Behind their spouses humbly rode,
In camlet cloak attired ;

And in such fashion, on this day
They now prepared to go,
For when to meet their friends they went,
They always travelled so.

Now Daniel was an absent man,
And silently inclined,
And on this morning much he had
To occupy his mind.

So, seated on his steady nag,
Beside the mounting-stone,
He tightly held the reins, and left
His spouse to mount alone.

“Come, precious,” he had said to her,
But never turned to see
If Martha, in the pillion placed,
Was seated suitably.

He jogged along most soberly
With deep, abstracted mind,
And took no thought of how his spouse
Was getting on behind.

A bright Spring morn, the birds sang sweet,
The landscape smiled around,
But worthy Daniel paid no heed
To either sight or sound.

For many a mile still on he rode,
Uphill and down went he,
Till he began to think it near
To meeting-time must be.



He saw the hats and bonnets move
Around the open door,
His horse began to quicken pace,
It knew the road of yore.

'Twas time that Martha should alight,
The stable was hard by,—
“Come, precious, here we are!” he said,—
No Martha made reply!

Slowly he turned him round to see
If she asleep had been,—
Only an empty pillion there,
No Precious could be seen!

Poor Daniel! grievous was his case,
That Monthly-Meeting-day,
His precious Martha had been left,
Unknown, eight miles away.



WHAT THE CHAPEL BELLS SAID.



A SIMPLE story, few in words,
Yet in its fact and teaching true,
Freshly the other day I heard,
So now I pass it on to you.

A Friends' neat white-washed meeting-place
Close by a Romish chapel stood,
(No matter whence the tale we trace,
Perchance across the Atlantic flood).

There hung within the chapel tower
A set of loudly pealing bells,
And in their quiet meeting-hour
Friends ever heard their changing swells.

With peaceful face and silver hair,
That well the upper gallery graced,
Oldest of those who worshipped there,
An aged woman-Friend was placed.

Below, one of the younger fair,
Gazing upon this ancient Friend,
Whose folded hands and placid air
Appeared all peace to comprehend,

Could not a curious fancy curb,
While dwelling on her mien resigned,—
“How must those sounds,” she thought, “disturb
The meditations of her mind!”

One day, in sympathetic tone,
The young addressed the aged Friend,
“I’ve felt for thee,” she said, “I own,
And wished those pealing chimes would end.

I’ve often thought those noisy bells
Must on thy silent Meeting jar :
Do not their oft-repeated swells
Thy peaceful contemplations mar?”

Upon the elder’s features, played
A smile with grateful feeling fraught,
“I thank thee, dear,” she gently said,
“And feel the kindness of thy thought ;

But to my heart those bells are sweet,
A blessed melody they hold,—
‘And other sheep,’ their tones repeat,
‘I have, who *are* not of *this* fold.’”

Oh ! that each day our spirit’s ear
Might with such tune keep closer time,
And that our hearts could ever hear
The music of like holy chime.



ABEN-HAMET, THE LAST OF THE
ABENCERRAGES.

(Adapted from the prose of Chateaubriand.)

THE date was ripe in sunny Granada,
Heavy with fruitage drooped her lemon-trees,
The vine upon the hills of Malaga
Laid bare her purple clusters to the breeze,
Ripe was the bloom on the pomegranate found,
The orange and the fig ungathered strewed the ground.

'Twas long ago, the time of chivalry,
Age of the grandeur and the power of Spain,—
Oh! land of sunshine, song, and poetry,
How soon did all thy light and glory wane!
But sitting queen of conquests newly won,
The lustre of thy name was second then to none.—

There came a bark to Carthager's strand;
With folded arms, a stranger from the prow
With earnest gaze beheld the nearing land;
A shade of sadness overspread his brow,
An Arab's dress his alien birth revealed,
The while the nomad's garb a prince's rank concealed.

Then Aben-Hamet—such the stranger's name,
Stepped forth upon the shore with lordly mien,
He was a Moor, and to the land he came
Where once his fathers' dwelling-place had been,
Where a proud race of kings had held their sway,
Ere from Boabdil's hand the sceptre passed away.

And he was come, last of his fathers' race,
Last of the haughty Abencerrages,—
A line of heroes who their name could trace,
Rich in a thousand valorous memories,—
Come from his land of exile, to behold
The glorious Granada his kings had ruled of old.

The country, that for nigh eight hundred years
 Had bowed beneath the Unbelievers' sway,
 Re-won at last to Spain by "Christian" spears,
 For ever from the Moors had passed away :
 Now many a year, the bannered cross had streamed
 From towers where erst the Moslem crescent gleamed.

Still, in their far-off home, the exiled Moors
 For that loved land with restless longing mourned,
 Saw in their dreams again her myrtle bowers,
 And even in their prayers their faces turned
 Across the ocean to the distant west,
 Where lay their long-lost Granada, the fair, the blest.

Pondering on all the glory that had been,
 Young Aben-Hamet slowly journeyed on,
 To see the place he never yet had seen,
 But where, since youth, his thoughts had ever gone,
 The mighty city of his fathers' kings,
 Whose pride and splendour still the Moorish minstrel sings.

Embosomed in her own pomegranate-bowers,
 At last he saw her glittering turrets rise,
 Around her stretched a plain, where fruit and flowers
 Burst forth luxuriant 'neath those bounteous skies,
 While at her feet, Dauro and Xenil rolled
 Their waters over sand, with silver strewn and gold.

Far off the towers of the Alhambra shone,
 Tears filled his eyes as Aben-Hamet gazed ;
 Awhile with folded arms and look cast down,
 All motionless he stood ; at length he raised
 His face to heaven, "'Twas *written* thus," he said,
 And through the city-gate went in with princely tread.

In close disguise, that none might guess his birth,
 And lost in deep and mournful reveries,
 At dawn again the young Moor wandered forth,
 The palace of the Abencerrages
 To view, to kneel beside their burial-place ;—
 'Twas there that first he saw fair Donna Blanca's face.

And in his love for her, he half forgets
The sorrows that his bosom erst had known ;
Though for his fathers' land his heart still beats,
No more he sighs for Granada alone,
Before a fairer still that form must fade,
In all his dreams he sees the lovely Christian maid.

Alas ! Alas ! for mournful is my song,—
Why must a tale of love be full of woe ?
Why must love's waters, as they move along,
Meet with so many rocks to check their flow ?
Is it her secret depths to purify,
Or, by resistance met, her hidden strength to try ?—

For Donna Blanca owed her noble birth
To the renowned hidalgos of Bivar,
Heroes, who through long ages had gone forth
To meet the Moor in many a bloody war,
Whose strong right arm had swept him from these plains ;
Blood of the conquering Cid flowed in her father's veins.

And Aben-Hamet knew not that he loved
The daughter of his fathers' mortal foe,
And that the new-born joy his spirit proved,
Must soon, alas ! be turned to bitter woe ;
His Moorish race he sought not to conceal,
His noble birth alone would he not yet reveal.

Amid the olive and the myrtle bowers,
In the soft air of that delightful clime,
In Granada, the land of fruits and flowers,
And in the glory of her Autumn time,
They met and loved, as hath been oft before,
Though she a Christian maid, he unbelieving Moor.

Her foot was lightest in the Spanish dance,
Her voice the sweetest to the soft guitar,
Now would she sing some Moorish old romance,
Now the love-songs of her own Granada ;
While, in her father's palace, at her feet,
Tales of the glowing East would the young Moor repeat ;

Or in the now-deserted halls and bowers,
Where once his kings had held voluptuous sway,
'Mid the Alhambra's gorgeous marble towers,
Did Aben-Hamet and fair Blanca stray ;
Among the fountains and the orange-trees,
Where every odour breathed of Moorish memories.

There, through the music of the waters' play,
Amid the myrtle-grove their love was told ;—
But wherefore should I thus prolong the lay ?
Why seek with artless hand their love to unfold ?
For must one fatal bar their lives divide,
How can *he* hope, a Moor, to win a Christian bride ?

"Oh ! Blanca, Aben-Hamet's heart till death
Will beat for thee and thee alone," he cried,
"And if thou but embrace the Prophet's faith,
No power can ever part him from thy side."
"Renounce *thy* faith, and I am thine," she said,
"But ne'er can *Moslem* Moor with Blanca hope to wed.

My heart is thine, and will be thine till death,
Yet will a Spanish maid the Moslem show,
Her love, her life, but ne'er her father's faith,
Don Roderigo's daughter can forego !"
Such was their hopeless love, and such the power
That bound, yet held apart, the Christian and the Moor.

Now, all too soon must Aben-Hamet leave
For Tunis' far-off strand fair Blanca's side,
His mother's dying blessing to receive,—
"Farewell, oh ! dearer than my life," he cried,
"When next the date is ripe, I will return,
Till then this heart for thee shall never cease to yearn."

With bitter tears they parted on the shore,
"Farewell, oh, love !" she said, "and day by day
Will Blanca, till she sees thy face once more,
Beseech the God to whom the Christians pray,
That from thine error He would set thee free."
"*My* prayers to Allah shall, oh, love, arise for thee !"

Slow rolled the months, once more the sunny land
Brought forth its fruits, and Aben-Hamet came ;
True to her vows, she met him on the strand,
Their love, their *faiths*, they found alike the same,
Still day by day their changeless love was told,
While each more dear than love his fathers' faith did hold.

Another year, again they met, but now
To part in sorrow, nevermore to meet,
For though each faithful heart will keep its vow,
And love the same till it shall cease to beat,
Now, Blanca, daughter of the Cid, *he* knows,
She, of what line *he* came, her father's mortal foes.

What could remain for honour, but to part,
Hostile alike in faith, and blood, and race ?
Then, with the inborn greatness of his heart,
Each rose with constancy his woe to face,—
" Blanca," he said, " thou know'st my love for thee,
How shall I seek to prove more worthy thine for me ? "

Immovable he stood, she raised her head,
Where, hot with unshed tears, her dark eyes burn,
Firmly, but low, the parting words were said,
" Back to his deserts must the Moor return ! "
She spoke no more ; " Oh, noble maid ! " he cried,
" Unworthy had I been to wed with such a bride ! "

Straightway he went ; in holy pilgrimage
To kneel and pray beside his prophet's tomb,
Nobly he strove his sorrow to assuage,
And meet with fortitude his " written " doom ;
Then sought the deserts of his tribe again,
And nevermore beheld the sunny shores of Spain.

But year by year, still when the date was ripe,
Would Donna Blanca seek the distant shore,
Upon the hills he knew, her watch to keep,
And strain her eyes the purple waters o'er,
If she perchance on the horizon pale
Might catch the far-off gleam of Aben-Hamet's sail.

The grapes were gathered, and the vine-leaves fell,
And to her father's home the maid returned,
Yet she her secret pang concealed so well,
That none could tell that Donna Blanca mourned.
She shed no tear, she gave no sign of pain,—
Such was the pride that swayed the daughters of old Spain.

Once more, upon the slopes of Malaga,
The purple clusters of the vine were prest,
But, 'mid the groves of her own Granada,
Don Roderigo's daughter lay at rest ;
The orange and the red pomegranate-bloom
In early Summer fell on Donna Blanca's tomb.

Far off in Tunis, 'neath the date-palm's shade,
Where from the desert blows the southern breeze,
There is a grave wherein a Moor is laid,
Last of the race of Abencerrages ;—
O'er Aben-Hamet's tomb the warm wind sweeps,
Then seeks the distant land where Donna Blanca sleeps.





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